

Kentucky Teacher

April 2010

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Christian County preschool teachers hit the road to reach students

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Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to *Kentucky Teacher*, 612 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteacher@education.ky.gov.

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Printed with state funds by LexPress, Lexington, Ky., on recycled paper
ISSN 1526-3584

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Front cover: Preschool teacher Beverly Campbell counts buttons with Jallyn Rogers at A Kid's Place daycare in Hopkinsville. Photo by Amy Wallot

EXPLORE and PLAN scores show improvement

Kentucky's 8th- and 10th-grade public school students' scores on EXPLORE and PLAN assessments moved up slightly during the fall 2009 test administration.

In 2009, 48,347 8th-grade Kentucky students in 323 public schools took the EXPLORE assessment. The scoring scale for the EXPLORE assessment is from 1 to 25. See chart below for EXPLORE scores from 2006-09.

EXPLORE is a high school readiness examination designed to help 8th-graders

explore a broad range of options for their future. The exam assesses four subjects (English, mathematics, reading and science) and provides needs assessments and other components to help students plan for high school and beyond.

In 2009, 49,589 10th-grade Kentucky students in 228 public schools took the PLAN assessment. The scoring scale for the PLAN assessment is from 1 to 32. See chart below for PLAN scores from 2006-09.

PLAN helps 10th-graders build a solid foundation for future academic and career success and provides information needed to address school districts' high-priority issues. The exam assesses four subjects (English, mathematics, reading and science) and is a predictor of success on the ACT.

MORE INFO...

<http://bit.ly/09EXPLOREPLAN>

Average EXPLORE Scores					
Subject	Kentucky				Nation
	2006	2007	2008	2009	Norms set in 2005
English	13.6	13.7	13.8	14.0	14.2
Mathematics	14.2	14.4	14.6	14.9	15.1
Reading	13.8	13.7	13.9	14.2	13.8
Science	15.8	15.8	16.0	16.1	15.9
Composite	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.9	14.9

Average PLAN Scores					
Subject	Kentucky				Nation
	2006	2007	2008	2009	Norms set in 2005
English	15.6	15.3	15.9	15.8	16.9
Mathematics	16.3	16.2	16.4	16.5	17.4
Reading	16.0	16.1	16.0	16.2	16.9
Science	17.4	17.3	17.4	17.6	18.2
Composite	16.4	16.3	16.6	16.7	17.5

Expulsions, other discipline down, violations up in grades 10-12

From Kentucky Center for School Safety

The 10th annual Safe Schools Data Report, produced by the Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS), reveals 10-year lows in the number of expulsions and corporal punishments, which are at the lowest levels since 1999-2000.

The most significant findings from the report reveal 10-year lows in corporal punishments and the number of expulsions. In addition, there were no homicides or rapes reported for the 10th consecutive year.

The data also show a dramatic reduction over a five-year period in total disciplinary actions for board and law violations. Disciplinary actions for disturbing class and for drug possession also were down.

Part II Law Violations, which are considered less serious but still could result in an arrest, decreased in the past year. And there were very few disciplinary actions for menacing or abuse.

While disciplinary actions in grades K-9 were down markedly over a five-year period, they increased among 10th-, 11th- and 12th-graders. Disciplinary actions for serious law violations also increased slightly from 2007-08, with most of that increase attributable to larceny-theft and robbery. Disciplinary actions for simple assault and drug distribution also increased from 2007-08 totals,



Photo by Amy Wallot

Observing change

Science teacher Casey LaGrange helps freshmen McCade Freeman, left, Matthew Pruett and Brittney Wells set up their experiment in LaGrange's Integrated Science class at Dawson Springs High School (Dawson Springs Independent). The students' experiment was in a lab titled "Chemical Personalities," and the purpose was to identify various physical and chemical properties of matter and distinguish between chemical and physical changes.

as did the total number of days that students were absent from school due to out-of-school suspension.

For the first time, all Kentucky public school districts used Infinite Campus as their data management system, which has the potential to provide more timely analy-

sis of school safety data at the state and district level.

The full report can be read on the KCSS Web site.

MORE INFO...

www.kysafeschools.org

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Terry Holliday, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education

Student assessment begins amid planning for changes

This month, students begin taking the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) in reading, mathematics, science, social studies and on-demand writing. As a result of Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), which ended the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) and required the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to establish a new accountability system based on new standards, students will not be tested in arts and humanities or practical living, and writing portfolios are not part of their scores in 2010 and 2011.

For the next two years, schools are going to be held accountable for the existing *Core Content for Assessment* in conjunction with the *Program of Studies*. In the coming months, KDE and its partners will begin developing a new assessment and accountability system based in part on the fewer, clearer and higher Common Core State Standards initiative recently endorsed by the Kentucky Board of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Education Professional Standards Board. This is a great opportunity for Kentucky to develop a robust and balanced assessment and accountability system for the future.

While students are taking the same tests as in years past, there are some new aspects to this year's assessment. In 2010 and 2011, students in grades 3-7 will take a norm-referenced test in reading and mathematics one week before or after the KCCT. Data from the tests, including how Kentucky students perform compared with national norm groups, will be reported to parents and educators.

The science and social studies portions of assessment have been restructured into two sections.

The KCCT will measure current *Core Content for Assessment* so teachers have time to include the new Common Core Standards before students are tested on them during the 2011-12 school year. Finally, the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability has resumed its role as adviser to Kentucky on its new assessment and accountability system.

As we enter a new era of assessment and accountability, I know

that you will seize the challenge to move us forward and do what is right for Kentucky's children. Our focus is, and must remain, doing what's best for kids and moving every child to the highest level of achievement possible.

They deserve no less. Our stakeholders expect nothing less. And we should demand nothing less of ourselves.

Task force begins work

The Governor's Transforming Education in Kentucky (TEK) Task Force has begun meeting, and one of the key issues that TEK is charged with is the early childhood-to-school transition. This issue really ignites a passion that I have for addressing the needs of children.

As a superintendent in North Carolina, I saw firsthand the impact of early childhood programs on student readiness for school. I also know that addressing student vocabulary development in the early years of childhood is essential or students will come to school already several years behind.

To improve school readiness, things we are doing in Kentucky include:

- development of regional teams to address issues and barriers to high-quality programs and schools for children birth-8 years old through the Kentucky Great by 8 economic growth initiative
- collaborative partnerships through the KIDS NOW initiative that help promote a focus on whole-child development
- recognition of Preschool Classrooms of Excellence and Early Childhood Centers of Quality/Excellence



Holliday

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• recent release of the *Field Guide to the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* with ideas on how to incorporate the early learning standards in program planning What we would like to see includes:

- a definition of school readiness that focuses on the whole child – ready child, ready schools, ready families and communities
- reliable, appropriate assessment implemented by the kindergarten teacher after the first 30 days of a child's attendance for student mastery of the standards
- stronger partnerships between private child care, Head Start and state-funded preschool to promote collaboration, quality and opportunities for more children to attend preschool

My experience is that if schools are not ready for the children, the impact of early childhood programs will be lost by the 3rd grade. The investment in early childhood has the potential of affecting our economy

and social program costs over the long run. However, schools also must do their part in connecting with the preschool and early childhood community. It is terrific to find this connection already happening in several school districts in Kentucky. See the story on page 9 for an example of this collaboration in Christian County. The Governor's TEK Task Force's focus on this issue also will highlight the need and possible solutions.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Holliday at terry.holliday@education.ky.gov.)

Commissioner of Education Web page

Find more information about Kentucky's commissioner of education at www.education.ky.gov. Click on the "Commissioner of Education" link in the list to the left to see the commissioner's pages, messages to superintendents, a biography of Commissioner Terry Holliday, presentations and more.



Photo by Amy Wallot

SMART students

Second-grade student Jacob Winters, left, Ryan St. Clair, center, and Cassidi Macaraniag demonstrate a money-counting and addition activity using a SMART table for Principal Josh Jackson in Thea Caple's class at Ludlow Elementary School (Ludlow Independent). "The kids love them (SMART tables), and it helps them learn to work cooperatively," Caple said.

Teachers key to turning around lowest-performing schools

By Matthew Tungate

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School districts could replace more than half a school's teachers or close it altogether under two of the four options to address low-performing schools approved as part of new law passed by the Kentucky General Assembly earlier this year.

While those worst-case scenarios may concern some, affected teachers should look at the new law and the corresponding regulation approved by the Kentucky Board of Education as opportunities to make positive changes to the instructional practices that have traditionally had "very toxic cultures," according to David Cook with the Department of Education's Office of Leadership and School Improvement.

"In many cases, it is a culture of low expectations that has kept the school from succeeding," Cook said. "Making these kinds of dramatic changes should make the working conditions for teachers in these schools improve dramatically."

In fact, school improvement is the reason for the law, which passed as House Bill 176 (HB 176), he said. Passage of HB 176 makes Kentucky eligible for \$45 million in Title I School Improvement grant money in addition to strengthening the state's bid for \$200 million in federal Race to the Top (RTTT) funding.

"HB 176 was enacted because the federal government requires us to have a definition of 'persistently low-achieving' schools and the ability to implement one of the four intervention options in HB 176 in order to access federal school improvement funds," Cook said. "RTTT is actually an add-on to these requirements. Even if we don't get RTTT, we still must have the definition and intervention options."

The bill passed unanimously in both the state House and Senate.

"We must invest in our young people," Senate Education Committee Chair Ken Winters said. "That starts with making sure low-performing schools receive appropriate attention."

Once a school meets the criteria to be con-

sidered "persistently low-achieving," it and the district will receive audits, Cook said. School audits determine the principal's capacity to lead the turnaround of the school and whether the school council should retain its authority, he said. The district audit determines if the central office staff can manage the turnaround in the identified school, he said.

The regulation requires the audit team to judge the school council and principal on whether they can:

- function as an effective learning community and support a climate conducive to performance excellence
- actively engage families and community groups to remove barriers to learning
- focus on job-embedded professional learning
- make instructional decisions that focus on teaching and learning and high expectations
- organize school to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance

available resources to support high student and staff performance

- effectively identify needs of all students; set specific, measurable goals to address those needs; implement specific strategies to reach those goals; provide adequate resources to implement those strategies; and frequently monitor implementation of strategies and make adjustments when strategies are not achieving desired outcomes

"These factors are taken from the *Standards and Indicators for School Improvement* and have been shown to be key indicators of what makes a high-functioning learning environment," Cook said.

Districts will be judged on similar standards and indicators.

"It is also very important to note that during the audit

process, teachers will be taking a 'working conditions survey' so they can voice their opinions about what needs to change at the school," Cook said.

The audit team recommends to the commissioner of education whether the school



Photo by Tim Thornberry

Commissioner Terry Holliday speaks at the signing ceremony for House Bill 176 (HB 176) while Gov. Steve Beshear listens. HB 176 is legislation that addresses persistently low-performing public schools. The legislation also enhanced Kentucky's application for Title I School Improvement money and the Race to the Top initiative.

council should retain its authority, act as advisers or be replaced; whether the current principal should remain in place; and whether the central office staff can manage the necessary changes to improve the school, according to the law.

According to the Department of Education's regulation, the commissioner of education will notify the school council, superintendent and local board of education of the audit's findings. That leaves four options for who will decide how to improve the school:

- The school council can manage the change, and the district can support the change. Under this scenario, the school council decides which intervention option to use and develops an action plan. The school council presents the plan to the local board of education, which must provide the necessary support and resources for the recovery effort. Cook said the local board must accept the school council's decision.
- The school council cannot manage the change, but the district can support change. In this case the council's authority is transferred to the superintendent, who recommends an intervention option to the local board of education, which makes the final decision.
- The school council can manage the change, but the district cannot support it. In this instance the school council will choose the intervention option and submit its choice to the local board of education. The local board will then submit the decision to the commissioner of education. "In this case, since the school council retained its authority, the commissioner will basically be obliged to accept the choice," Cook said. "Only if both the school council and district lack capacity will the commissioner have the ability to question the choice."
- The school council cannot manage the change, and the district cannot support it. In this case, the

Kentucky law gives school councils the following responsibilities:

- determination of curriculum
- instructional practices
- professional development
- selection of the principal and consultation on all personnel decisions
- assignment of staff time
- assignment of students
- schedule for the day and week
- school budget
- school improvement planning
- technology use
- use of school space
- discipline, classroom management and school safety
- extracurricular programs and student participation in them
- public participation in school
- collaboration with other schools, districts and agencies
- waiver of district policies

cannot manage the change, but the district can support change. In this case the council's authority is transferred to the superintendent, who recommends an intervention option to the local board of education, which makes the final decision.

(See **Teachers** on page 10)

Potter Gray Elementary gravitates toward success

By Susan Riddell

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Potter Gray Elementary School (Bowling Green Independent) has educating its students down to a science.

The K-5 school with 450 students puts an emphasis on science and mathematics, one of the many reasons it was named a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. Potter Gray Elementary is one of five Kentucky public elementary schools to earn that distinction.

The Blue Ribbon School honor recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Blue Ribbon Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Jim Tinius has been the principal at Potter Gray Elementary for eight years. A former teacher and coach in the district, Tinius said the school stands out because of its testing success and equal effort from students, staff and parents.

"Basically we were selected (as a Blue Ribbon school) because Potter Gray Elementary had attained and maintained high scores on the state assessment over the past five years," Tinius said. "I feel this success could well be attributed to the fact that we have the complete triangle: students that work hard, a strong staff that builds relationships with their students and strong, positive parental involvement."

Mathematics and science are points of emphasis at Potter Gray Elementary when making sure students are prepared for testing. Tinius and his staff believe variety in science opportunities plays an important role in attaining high test scores.

Several students from the school participate in Space Camp each March. In its 11th year, Space Camp invites students to Huntsville, Ala., for a week to expand on their sci-

entific interests, and it's one of the many camps offered by the U.S. Space and Rocket Center.

"This gives the oldest students of our school an opportunity to ... discover more about math, science, space history and how concepts relate in the real world," said Nita Cole, who teaches 4th-grade mathematics and science. "They are able to do this through hands-on activities, team building, simulated space missions and other activities."

While participating students thrive at Space Camp, Potter Gray Elementary also provides year-round science learning with a mix of in-school and extracurricular activities.

"The Potter Gray (Elementary) science committee hosts a Science Day biannually, on which community members come and share their expertise in different science fields for all students through rotations and demonstrations along with a schoolwide culminating activity," Cole said. "The other year is a time for all 4th- and 5th-graders to participate in a schoolwide science fair utilizing the scientific method. All students rotate through the fair to learn more about the problems chosen to solve, awards are given, and a schoolwide culminating activity is planned for the afternoon."

Other opportunities for students include the indoor science lab in which all students benefit from hands-on activities on different topics.

"What makes this science lab unique is that it is traditionally staffed by parent volunteers throughout the school day. With in-depth lesson plans prepared by the science committee, parents guide students through the learning with teachers in the background to assist

only as needed," Cole said. "This gives all students the opportunity for experiments weekly, and it supports parent involvement, as they serve as role models in our school."

"Potter Gray (Elementary) is a family school," Cole added. "We all work hard to



Photo by Amy Wallot

Students in Catherine Hogan's 2nd-grade class watch an experiment dealing with force and motion in the science lab at Potter Gray Elementary School (Bowling Green Independent), a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. Principal Jim Tinius said mathematics and science are points of emphasis for students at the school.

provide the best possible education and environment for students to learn and grow. We are very fortunate to have wonderful parent involvement in our school."

Gifted 5th-grade students at Potter Gray Elementary also compete in the FIRST LEGO League (FLL).

FLL uses challenges based on real-world scientific problems to engage children in research, problem solving and engineering. It is meant to enhance their enjoyment in science and technology, according to its Web site. More than 140,000 children in 56 countries are active in FLL.

"The 2008-09 school year was our first year to participate in FLL," Gifted and Talented Teacher Carrie Koedyker said. "All three of our teams advanced to the state competition. One team won second place in the state for our research project. We feel that participating in the (FIRST) LEGO League supports our district initiatives to help students develop global awareness, innovation, critical thinking skills, collaboration skills, communication skills and technology skills."

While science events are common practice at Potter Gray Elementary, Tinius said his school has shown the greatest progress in mathematics testing.

"I believe our math scores have shown the most consistent improvement the last few years," Tinius said. "In 2007, our percentage of proficient and distinguished scores was 85 percent and has risen steadily to 92 percent in 2009."

"We feel we have been more deliberate in time spent on basic facts, multi-step problems and open response type questions explaining the how and why," Tinius said.

"We want our students to enjoy being at school, feel they perform better when they are having fun, but still understand that the primary objective is to learn," Tinius added.

Last year, Potter Gray Elementary had three gifted 5th graders take pre-Algebra through Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS). "We felt they could really benefit from this challenge, and we gave them that opportunity," Tinius said.

"All three students passed the class with an A," Koedyker added. "Due to their success, the school system has now implemented the use of KVHS to meet the needs of 5th-grade students who demonstrate high ability in math."

MORE INFO...

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"We want our students to enjoy being at school, feel they perform better when they are having fun, but still understand that the primary objective is to learn."

— Jim Tinius, Potter Gray Elementary School principal

Technology specialist gives mathematics '180 Degree' turn

By Matthew Tungate

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Former mathematics teacher Lisa Johnson knows a little something about equations. With 16 years' experience in education, she also knows that sometimes they don't work out until you change the variables.

In 2007, she joined the Jefferson County school district's Computer Education Support team (CES) as one of 15 district-level technology resource teachers who provide professional development and ongoing support for teachers to help them use technology in ways that will increase student achievement. That year, she and some colleagues were brainstorming about how the Apple iPod touch might work in an elementary mathematics classroom.

"The students didn't want to read the textbook, but I thought they would surely watch video lessons on an (iPod touch)," Johnson said. "They could then take online quizzes for homework so the teacher could see how well they understood the content before coming to class. Covering core content could become homework prior to the students coming to class. Class time could then be spent engaged with the students in cooperative learning activities using the core content and engaged in conversation around misconceptions."

But the video lessons had to come from somewhere. Originally the plan was to pay a teacher to create and post them, but that idea became unmanageable, she said. Then Johnson attended a conference and saw a session about publishing student work. That's when the idea clicked.

"Teaching students by having them create. It was a beautiful concept. Our problem of where to get the videos was solved," Johnson said. "Our students would create the content for posting and viewing by each other."

For that combination of ideas, which eventually became a pilot project called the 180 Degree Classroom, and some other initiatives, the National School Boards Association designated Johnson as one of its 2009 "20 to Watch" list of school technology leaders.

The 180 Degree Classroom was presented as restructuring the traditional high school mathematics classroom into a student-centered, inquiry-based learning environment. Rather than learning through a teacher lecture, students work together to understand specific mathematics concepts and to create



Photo by Amy Wallot

Juniors Nathan Snyder, Hunter Randolph, Justin Hina and Joseph Dixon (pictured clockwise from left) work out a problem in Jose Alfaro's pre-calculus class at Louisville Male High School (Jefferson County). The students are assigned a selected problem, work it out, write out the work on a computer tablet, create a video recording of the steps and then are able to use the Apple iPod touch to view the problem later. The activity is part of the pilot 180 Degree Classroom.

video lessons saved as podcasts that teach the concepts to their peers.

Students use a tablet PC (a tablet-shaped computer equipped with a touch screen or stylus) to prepare their lessons as the teacher circulates around the room providing just-in-time instruction. They use an iPod touch at home to view the lessons and take an online quiz to assess their learning. The next day in class, the teacher already knows which topics they have grasped and which ones they are struggling to understand, allowing students more opportunities to apply the concepts to real-world situations.

"Instead of instruction being led by the teacher, groups of students work together to create video lessons on topics that would have traditionally been presented by the teacher. The students can use online resources for help, or ask the teacher directly for help," Johnson said. "Having the students ask the teacher for help changes the whole classroom/learning dynamic."

Jefferson County "pre-piloted" the 180 Degree Classroom in January 2009, and it is in a formal pilot program at Louisville Male High School this year in two of teacher Jose Alfaro's pre-calculus classes.

Through the pilot, Johnson said she

learned that having the students take the iPod touch home was not as beneficial as she'd first thought, since students used their home computers to view the online video lessons. Instead, the students use the iPod touch for Internet access during class. She also found that the tablet PCs, which allow the students to graphically show their work, were the surprise of the pilot. CES paid for the technology.

Alfaro already had some experience with integrating technology into his classes. He was using an interactive whiteboard, posting PDFs of his class notes and making video podcasts before piloting the 180 Degree Classroom.

"I love the idea because now my classroom has the tools to actively engage students in their own learning and teaching," he said. "That is what my pre-calculus students are doing – they are teaching each other very difficult concepts with examples that clarify the math concepts of the lesson."

Alfaro still teaches, he said, introducing topics and sharing his experience. But he doesn't have to be in front of the group all the time. Alfaro said he is able to monitor the learning environment and have more time to help struggling students. There are chal-

lenges, he said, such as time constraints and environmental issues including computer problems, Internet access and noise level while recording the lessons.

"But these are just small hurdles in comparison to the huge benefits of the program," he said. "Students are not just learning math; they are learning communication skills, problem-solving strategies, group work and strategies to apply technology in their learning process."

Sharon Shrout, Jefferson County's CES director, said Alfaro was a good choice to pilot the program because he had embraced the use of technology in his classroom.

"The next step is to implement it in a more typical 'middle of the road' school with a formal evaluation," Shrout said. "We will do this next year in two classrooms and see if it is as successful. If it is, we'll expand it to additional classrooms."

Alfaro believes the philosophy of the 180 Degree Classroom would work beyond mathematics.

"Students become problem-solvers, risk-takers and more actively engaged in the class," he said. "You will not find a student sleeping in this class, you will never find a student working in another subject. They are engaged because they feel the importance of the concepts and the application, rigor and relevance of the subject."

"I am sure these strategies can be implemented at any level and with every subject."

Shrout said she recommended Johnson for the "20 to Watch" list because she has a natural curiosity about new technologies and the ways they can be applied in the classroom.

"She keeps her focus on improving teaching and learning, viewing technology as a tool," Shrout said.

Integrating technology into the classroom is important, Johnson said.

"Nothing can replace good teaching, but technology allows students the opportunity to contribute to their learning experience in ways not possible in its absence," she said. "It also allows teachers the opportunity to offer learning objects and experiences to students outside of the physical classroom limitations of space and time."

MORE INFO...

<http://bit.ly/JCPS180Classroom>

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Perry County finds good 'fit' for empty classrooms

By Susan Riddell

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Delilah Sue Brashear, principal at Viper Elementary School (Perry County), is a loser, and she's proud of it.

Brashear has dropped 26 pounds and several inches off her body since the school year began, thanks to her school's staff wellness center.

She's not alone, either. The Perry County school district has tried to promote teacher and student wellness through physical activity and smart eating habits.

"I have always thought that health, wellness and physical fitness are an integral part of one's life," said Brashear, who taught physical education for 20 years prior to becoming the Viper Elementary principal four years ago. "We felt as a staff that it would be hard to motivate our students to become healthier if we weren't motivated ourselves, so when the initiative came about with wellness in our schools, I was thrilled."

Several schools quickly went to work in Perry County, converting empty classrooms into wellness centers for staff.

R.W. Combs Elementary School has a room with three treadmills, an elliptical machine, an exercise bicycle, hand weights, jump ropes, an exercise ball and a television for exercise videos. The school's Parent Teacher Organization purchased the television, and the school received a \$400 grant for other supplies.

R. W. Combs Elementary also was recently recognized by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation, as a success story for how schools can be role models for students when it comes to healthy habits and lifestyles.

"In addition to the fitness center, (R.W. Combs) teachers have had health fairs with a primary care center doing free cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure checks," said Linda Campbell, district food service director.

Chavies Elementary School Principal Eddie Browning said his school filled an empty room with a weight machine, treadmill, elliptical, abdominal machine and a Nintendo Wii Fit. The school made purchases through grants and other donations.

"Since opening the fitness center I can see a rejuvenation of the staff," said Browning, who is in his fifth year as the Chavies Elementary principal. "As with many organi-



Photos by Amy Wallot

Principal Delilah Sue Brashear, left, and Jamie Neace, family resource center director, exercise in the fitness room at Viper Elementary School (Perry County). Several schools in the Perry County school district have created wellness rooms for staff use to encourage healthy habits and exercise.

zations, you see staff fatigue set in during different times of the year. I have seen less fatigue, and I believe without a doubt that it can all be tied to the staff use of our wellness center."

Viper Elementary's wellness center houses a stationary bike, exercise balls, balance board and scales to go along with a donated total-body gym with attached weights, treadmill and abdominal machine. A local carpet store donated the flooring.

"Our resource director also had a local health clinic come into our school and perform wellness screenings such as blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure," Brashear said. "Some of us also keep health logs where we monitor weight, blood pressure and body measurements, and that helps to keep us motivated."

Brashear said she has been pleased with how the staff has bought in to getting in shape.

"Our staff has welcomed the addition of

our fitness room," Brashear said. "It is being used daily and has been a great asset to the minds and bodies of our school staff."

"Several of our instructional aides use the treadmill when they get their breaks," Brashear added. "We have bus drivers who come in after their evening runs to work out, too."

Barbara Donica, School Coordinated Health director for the Kentucky Department of Education, applauds efforts to promote health and wellness for teachers and students in Perry County.

"An enormous amount is going on in Perry County with many school health partners," Donica said. "The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is very active in Perry County."

Keeping a wellness center updated and monitored is an important aspect in making sure it succeeds, according to Browning.

"We have a wellness committee composed of four individuals who meet bi-monthly to make decisions on purchases and programs



Brashear does push-ups on a balance board in the fitness room at Viper Elementary.

to be used in our wellness center," Browning said. "The wellness center is open to all staff to be used before school, during school on breaks and after school. Staff members sign in and out so we track the use of the center."

"We have video exercise programs the staff can check out and use on the screen provided in the center," he added. "We also have exercise classes that meet throughout the week with high staff attendance. We have plans to begin wellness seminars and trainings for the staff and to use our physical education teacher to present wellness principles and programs. We also plan to purchase other equipment as funds become available."

Campbell said the district initiative to promote teacher wellness wouldn't be complete without positive reinforcement on nutrition and healthy eating habits.

"There also is a healthy school environment with documentation on the amount of physical activity that students get during the day and that only foods that meet the state law – low fat, low sugar – are served in vending machines or for snacks during the school day," Campbell said. "Skim or 1 percent milk, 100 percent juices and water are the only beverages served. Our lunches have a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables daily and offer low-fat, whole-grain breads and cereals."

MORE INFO...

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Instruments of learning

Unique music classes help students go beyond basics

By Matthew Tungate

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Walking into Sheri Satterly's music class at Hogsett Elementary School (Danville Independent) is like stepping back in Appalachian history.

Often students can be found strumming dulcimers – stringed instruments usually played across the lap, but seldom used in elementary school music rooms. But Satterly became interested in the traditional Appalachian dulcimer after attending a Kentucky Arts Council Arts Academy in 2005.

"I spent a week playing the dulcimer and fell in love. Not only is it a very effective way of teaching the Appalachian music core content, but it is also the state instrument of Kentucky," she said. "Upon playing the dulcimer for the first time, I found that it can be a very easy instrument to play. I decided from that point on that one day I would have a dulcimer lab in my classroom, and I never faltered from that goal."

In the fall of 2008, she applied for a grant through the Danville Education Founda-

tion, an organization in the Danville Independent school district that helps teachers get materials they otherwise wouldn't be able to fund. The following spring, a \$2,500 grant paid for 30 paper tune dulcimers, durable instruments made from a recycled wood product, for the students and one teacher dulcimer. It also helped bring a professional artist to Hogsett Elementary for a week in October to work with 4th- and 5th-graders on Appalachian and Colonial American music and dance.

"It was wonderful," Satterly said. "We topped it off with a luncheon where traditional Appalachian food was served and the students performed for their parents, friends and teachers."

"My dulcimer lab is the most useful tool that I have in my classroom."

Hogsett Elementary is just one of many schools around Kentucky using non-traditional means to teach music.

Music teacher Susan Boyer started a pull-out violin class at Hatcher and Oakview elementary schools (Ashland Independent) 10 years ago. She chooses students from teacher recommendations based largely on academic performance, she said.

Despite taking private violin lessons since she was 9 years old, Boyer said there is a more practical reason for teaching the violin rather than other instruments.

"Simply: time and money. My primary responsibility of preparing students in the core content for the state assessment required the majority of my day," she said. "The extra time that would be necessary to teach all of the string instruments would have reduced the efficiency of the classes, and violins were

the least expensive of the string instruments for the schools to purchase."

Boyer said her program is unique because most elementary string programs have a dedicated string specialist teaching the class.

"To my knowledge, I'm the only teacher whose class load is chiefly general music and who also teaches pull-out violin classes," she said. "Further, the schools own the instruments with no need for the parent to purchase the instrument for the child to participate."

Five years ago, then-first-year music teacher Erin Kelley was part of a team that proposed a keyboard lab at Taylorsville Elementary School (Spencer County). The school received a \$50,000 donation from Peoples Bank for a state-of-the-art keyboard lab including 31 keyboards, headphones and piano curriculum.

"A lab of this magnitude usually is not found in elementary schools or middle and high schools for that matter," she said. "We are very fortunate to be able to offer this opportunity to our students."

All 470 students participate in the keyboard lab and get a free piano lesson every week, Kelley said.

"It is used during every music class in some way or another," she said. "Depending

on the lesson being taught, sometimes we have 30 minutes in the lab and sometimes we may only have 15, but they still get that exposure every week."

Satterly said there are many benefits to having a non-traditional music program.

She incorporates the dulcimers at different times throughout the year. She uses them the most when teaching the Appalachian unit of study, which focuses on the music and dance of the Appalachian culture in Kentucky.

"They are also a very good tool for teaching the musical element of harmony," she said. "The dulcimer is most simply played by using chords. So, we divide up into two or three groups, and each group will play a different note of the chords that make up the song we are playing."

"I also use them to teach the musical element of form. They are very good for teaching call and response to the students. We use the song *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* to learn call and response. I play the call, 'Old MacDonald had a farm,' and the kids play the response, 'E-I-E-I-O.'"

"And of course, it is a great tool for helping the kids understand the timbre of string instruments. In the past, the students were just able to listen to and look at pictures of string instruments," Satterly said. "Now, they actually get to touch one and play it."

(See **Instruments** on page 10)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Music teacher Susan Boyer leads the 5th-grade violin class at Hatcher Elementary School (Ashland Independent). Hatcher Elementary is one of several schools around the state that offer students unique music instruction, including dulcimers, keyboards and strings.

"So many of our students are never exposed to anything besides what they hear on the radio. It is our job to make sure that those students get exposure to all types of music and all types of musical experiences."

Music teacher Sheri Satterly,
Hogsett Elementary School
(Danville Independent)

On the move

Christian County preschool teachers hit the road to reach students

By Susan Riddell

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Beverly Campbell is a preschool teacher without a classroom, but she isn't a preschool teacher without students.

Campbell and two other preschool teachers in the Christian County school district travel to area day care centers to work with 3- and 4-year-olds who are eligible for state-funded pre-K programs.

"This is my second year servicing day cares," said Campbell, who previously taught preschool at Millbrooke Elementary School in the district from 1999 through 2008. "It is a wonderful program, and everyone involved benefits from this."

The goal for the district is to get the children ready to learn when they enter kindergarten, said Patty Grable, district director of special education and preschool.

"Our local board understands the importance of high-quality learning experiences in the early years for preventing achievement gaps for groups such as students with disabilities and children from low socioeconomic backgrounds," Grable said. "By the time a child enters kindergarten, a gap could already be present unless some type of early intervention has occurred. It is critical to intervene early for some children, and providing high-quality preschool services has proven to be one of the most effective methods for doing so."

Campbell's day begins long before she greets her students at day cares within the Hopkinsville area. She has to pack all of her supplies for each day, making sure nothing gets left behind. Campbell must take with her all the books she will need for circle reading time, any art supplies not already at the day care, supplies for activities that go with her lesson plan and any paperwork she needs for the day.

Once she arrives at the day care, Campbell works with the children for about three hours before heading back to her office at the Civitan Educational Complex for an hour to prepare for her afternoon class. She repeats the same lessons and activities for the afternoon class before finishing her day back at her office calling parents and recording attendance and other data.

"The most difficult thing is not having my own classroom," Campbell said. "If I happen

to forget something I need, I can't just walk over to the cabinet and get it, so there is a lot of planning and organization needed.

"I was wary at first, but once I got used to doing everything and got a system and a routine set up, it is the best job I have ever had," Campbell added. "I love what I do, and I love the people who I work with."

In the two years that Christian County has been sending preschool teachers to day care centers to teach pre-K students who are eligible for state programs, the number of students receiving instruction from certified teachers has increased 22 percent.

That's one reason the program has proven to be a win-win for the district and the day care centers in the community.

The school district lacked space to serve more pre-K students, so using the day care centers alleviated that concern. Also, transportation costs didn't mount despite the increase in students served.

"Students who are provided services at the local day care facilities do not require transportation," Grable said. "The money received from the state for preschool services has never fully covered the costs of providing preschool services in the district."

"The district has always had to provide funds to cover the costs of providing services for the children we are required to serve," Grable added. "By reducing the transportation costs, the district has been able to shift what money we were spending on transportation to providing services to some over-income children."

Day care centers benefit in that they have a certified teacher in the classroom. The centers can market that aspect when trying to increase enrollment and compete with other day care facilities.

"One director includes in her advertisement that her facility offers public school preschool services on-site," Grable said. "Another director was excited about the on-site professional development for her staff through their opportunity to observe our preschool teacher instructing at their facility."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Preschool teacher Beverly Campbell plays with Jallyn Rogers as he and other students participate in activities related to the Chinese New Year at A Kid's Place day care. Campbell spends her days visiting child care centers in Christian County to provide preschool curriculum.

Campbell said she takes great satisfaction in modeling for the day care workers.

"I try to teach how you are supposed to interact and work with the children," Campbell said. "The workers, and not just the ones who directly work with me, have told me how much they have learned by watching me and seeing the things I do to incorporate a theme into centers without relying solely on books."

Campbell, who includes working with special needs children into her schedule, also incorporates a reading program into her curriculum despite not having a classroom to shelve books.

"Students read – or have someone read to them – one book a night and write it down on a form," Campbell said. "When they have read one book a night for a month, they turn in the sheet and receive a book to keep. I have a lending library for them to take home books to read. When they return the book, they choose another book to take home."

"Once a month we have a 'Bookends Family Reading' meeting here at Civitan," Campbell added. "Parents come with the student, I read them a book, and they

receive a copy to keep. They do a craft that goes along with the book or the skills we are doing for the month."

Grable highly recommends that other districts consider following in Christian County's footsteps.

"You have to think outside the box and be flexible," Grable said. "We have encountered some bumps along the way that we had not planned for. You have to always keep what's best for children in your planning and decision-making process."

The long-term payoff, she said, is well worth dealing with those bumps along the way.

"Studies have proven that children who have participated in preschool are less likely to participate in special education, are less likely to drop out of school, are less likely to be involved in juvenile crime and are more likely to graduate high school and earn higher wages as an adult," Grable said.

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Teachers from page 4

council's authority is transferred to the commissioner of education, who will consult with the school council, superintendent and local board of education, before determining which intervention option to use. The identified school and local district shall implement the intervention option with support from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

Who has authority over the school is important, because the law requires schools identified as persistently low-performing to engage in one of the four intervention options.

"In all the models the intent is to improve the environment in the school so students are more engaged and teachers can have the opportunity to improve their practice," Cook said. "Teachers should expect more opportunities for collaboration and more opportunities to show their students' progress."

The only option that will directly affect teachers is the restaffing option, he said. Many of the regulations defining this option relate directly to teachers, including:

- using local standards to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment
- selecting new staff to replace those transferred or dismissed
- implementing strategies designed to increase opportunities for career growth

- providing staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development

The principal and school council also may be replaced under this option. The new principal, trained in turning around low-achieving schools, would have the flexibility to adjust staffing, calendars, time and budgeting. The regulation also requires schools using this model to be data-driven, research-based and vertically integrated, and to use formative, interim and summative assessments to differentiate instruction, among other things.

The transformation option also includes the option of replacing the school principal and school council members, but does not require 50 percent or more of the teachers to be replaced. In fact, it has many of the same requirements as the restaffing option, but also includes that a "rigorous, transparent and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals" be used, taking into account data on student growth and other performance factors.

It also requires "additional leadership and compensation opportunities to school leaders, teachers and other staff who have increased student achievement and high-school graduation rates, if applicable, and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so."

Four intervention options required in HB 176 are:

- **external management option** – requires that day-to-day management of the school be transferred to an education management organization that may be a for-profit or non-profit organization that has been selected by a local board of education from a list of management organizations
- **restaffing option** – requires replacement of the principal and the existing school-based decision making council unless audit reports recommended otherwise; screening of existing faculty and staff with the retention of no more than 50 percent of the faculty and staff at the school; and development and implementation of a plan of action that uses

research-based school improvement initiatives designed to turn around student performance

- **school closure option** – requires closure of an existing school; transfer of its students to other district schools that are meeting their accountability measures; and reassignment of the school's faculty and staff to available positions within the district
- **transformation option** – includes replacing the school principal and school council members unless audit reports recommended otherwise and instituting an extensive set of specified strategies designed to turn around the identified school

To use the school closure option, a school council or district must establish how students will be transferred to higher-performing schools within the district, monitor students' progress at their new schools and determine how staff, buildings and other assets will be reassigned.

Cook said most districts aren't large enough to use this option.

"About 80 percent of our school districts have one high school," he said. "School closure is next to impossible."

According to the regulation, the organization chosen to run a school under the external management option will come from a list approved by the Kentucky Board of Education using a still-to-be-determined

review process. The management organization will make personnel decisions, according to the regulation.

Cook said the organization would be paid through federal school improvement grants.

All of the schools would have to give quarterly progress reports to their local school boards and KDE.

Once schools have chosen a turnaround option, they can apply for school improvement grants and receive an educational recovery specialist from KDE, Cook said.

MORE INFO...

www.lrc.ky.gov/record/10RS/HB176/bill.doc
<http://bit.ly/KDEregHB176>

Instruments from page 8

There is no better way to teach children about instruments than for them to be able to have the hands-on experience."

She and her students have attended many performances at Norton Centre for the Arts at Centre College in Danville. She also has received a grant to take all 4th- and 5th-graders to the Kentucky Music Museum and Hall of Fame in Mount Vernon in May and another grant to buy several Native American and West African instruments, which are both cultures covered in the *Kentucky Core Content for Assessment*.

"So many of our students are never exposed to anything besides what they hear on the radio," she said. "It is our job to make sure that those students get exposure to all types of music and all types of musical experiences."

Kelley said her instruction in the keyboard lab varies depending on the age level. Most of the lesson time is taught as a whole group, but students also get practice on their own as well. She uses the lab the entire year with

every grade level except for kindergarten, which starts using the lab after the winter break.

The keyboard is great to use with classes for many reasons, she said.

"Research has shown that students who are exposed to some sort of consistent piano instruction perform better on standardized tests," Kelley said. "They also become better at math and develop stronger reading skills. Using the keyboard is also great for hand-eye coordination, especially at the kindergarten age. And most importantly, it is fun. The kids love going in there, and I am always able to get great instruction done because their interest is so high, and they are fully engaged."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fifth-grade student Jacob Sprague practices during Susan Boyer's violin class at Hatcher Elementary School (Ashland Independent).

Boyer praised the violin's virtues.

"Research shows that there are physiological benefits that result from playing a musical instrument in general and, because of the differentiation in the physical tasks required of the two hands in string instrument study, those benefits have been shown to be even greater," she said.

All three teachers agree that music instruction of all kinds has benefits.

Kelley said she would encourage teachers who have a music teacher in their building to collaborate with them on a regular basis.

"Music teachers have been equipped with

numerous ways to incorporate music into cross-curricular areas, and doing so is not only fun for the students but the teachers as well," she said. "If they do not currently have a music program in their schools, then their students are truly missing out, and they need to find some way to deliver a high-quality music education to their students."

"Developing the creative side of children is just as important as teaching them to read or write, and I am a strong advocate that all schools should provide music and other arts classes in their schools in order for children to be truly well-rounded."

Satterly agreed. "Being a music teacher is, in my mind, just as important as teaching math, reading and writing," she said. "For those kids that are like me when I was young, music is what they love best and what they know they want to do."

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Lab motivates students by making learning fun

By Matthew Tungate

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Monroe County Middle School teacher Robert Hawkins wants his students to take the knowledge they have learned in the classroom and apply it to problem solving and critical thinking. Unlike his peers throughout the state, however, Hawkins never uses grades as incentive.

For instance, when Hawkins had his students try bridge building, he laid out pages showing a bridge truss. Instead, some built items like cabins, clocks or a cat.

"And then one day somebody came in and built me a bridge truss," said Hawkins, wearing a tie bearing the face of Albert Einstein. "It jumped right out of the box – 'Bam!' – and there it was. And I knew that would be the case because not everybody is into the same thing. You're fishing to see what these people want to do, what will keep them coming back."

Another hands-on activity had students build a roller coaster as part of a unit on force and motion. The first class built the roller coaster, but it didn't work right. Successive classes attempted to fix it. At the end of the day, one student came in and figured out that a part was backwards, and the roller coaster worked, Hawkins said.

"That was one of those cool moments just to see how it works out," he said. "A lot of times it's open-ended."

That willingness to be a self-professed "passive observer" is what makes Hawkins a perfect fit for Monroe County Middle School's Mastery Learning Lab, according to Principal Tony Harlan. Teachers throughout the school use the lab as an incentive for students who reach mastery on summative assessments, Harlan said. While in the lab, students will work on a project directed by Hawkins or fellow Mastery Lab teacher Debbie Crowe that relates to a recent unit of study, and then they are allowed to work on something of their own personal interest, such as robotics, keyboarding, animation or even playing on a Nintendo Wii game system.

Students have to score a 92 percent on a summative assessment to make mastery. Students who did not reach mastery on their assessment get more individualized instruction from their classroom teacher while their classmates are in the Mastery Lab. When those students reach mastery on their retest, they are allowed to go to the Mastery Lab.

The Mastery Lab is actually part of a



Photo by Amy Wallot

Eighth-grade student Philip Stout shakes a table to simulate an earthquake during an experiment to create earthquake-safe structures in the Mastery Learning Lab at Monroe County Middle School. Looking on are (pictured left to right) 8th-graders Carleton Huff, Danna Pascual and Alma Guillen.

bigger schoolwide initiative on getting students to mastery, 7th-grade science teacher Hope Myatt said.

Monroe County Middle School is recipient of a grant through the Green River Regional Educational Cooperative that focuses on developing teacher competencies in science and science teaching. The major goals of the grant are formative assessment, rigor and relevance, inquiry-based learning and embedded, collegial learning of teachers.

As part of the grant, a group of teachers and administrators from the school and district saw a presentation two years ago from educational consultant Bob Holman, an expert in aligning curriculum, creating high-quality formative and summative assessments, differentiation and sound grading practices, Myatt said.

"The more that began to swish around in the brain, the more we were perfect for that concept. So at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, it hits me that we need to do this. We need to actually put this to some type of lab setting where it would be not only a reward for a child, but an extension of learning for a child also," she said. "Because you don't go to work and not get a paycheck. You've got to give them some type of incentive to work harder, to do better, to want to do better."

Myatt said she worked with her then-prin-

cipal and fellow science and mathematics teachers to get a room and supplies during the 2008-09 school year. Hawkins, who did his student teaching at the school, was hired as a full-time substitute for the class, which was open only to science and mathematics classes at the time.

"We started out with a box of balsa wood airplanes, and we worked them until you couldn't work them any more," Hawkins said.

And it helped, Harlan said. The number of proficient and distinguished students on state tests was up significantly and the number of novice and apprentice was down significantly, he said.

So the school decided to expand the Mastery Lab to every subject area, doubled the size of the room and limited each class to one day in the lab per month Harlan said.

The results are still positive, Myatt said. So far this year, 52 percent of her students mastered content the first time they were tested. The second time, an additional 20 percent reached mastery. "Three-quarters of my students have mastered that content, which is probably way above (normal)," she said.

"It's made teachers' lives so much easier too," Myatt added. "It's changed our whole philosophy on formative and summative assessments, it's changed our whole philoso-

phy on grading scales, and it's made the kids look forward to it."

Karen Copass, a 6th-grade geography and 8th-grade language arts teacher, said she couldn't wait for the lab to be expanded so her social studies students could use it this year.

"It is a very motivational tool for my students. Whenever we review and test, my students are very excited to do the best they can. I have had some tell me, 'Ms. Copass, before I've not been motivated. This has motivated me to do well. Before, in elementary school, I really didn't care what kind of grades I made. But with Mastery Lab, I want to go. I enjoy it.' It's really helped them to improve their study habits and do much better on our tests," she said.

Copass said she also likes that students are getting additional instruction even as they are reaping their rewards. For instance, after completing a unit on Latin America, her students were able to make masks associated with Latin American culture in the Mastery Lab.

"It gives them a build-on of something we couldn't cover heavily in class, so when they go into the Mastery Lab, they get a little taste of what we didn't get to spend a lot of time on in class," Copass said. "So it's something new to them, yet it relates to the core content that we've covered in class."

Hawkins said he and Crowe work with the teachers to find out what units they are studying, then try to find creative extensions of that learning to do in the Mastery Lab.

"Your core content is riddled with practical applications, and I try to make everything just that," he said.

Hawkins said he tries to keep classroom-related work to 15 or 20 minutes of the 45-minute class. He lets the students know he is not there to work them hard. "Low stress/no stress works pretty well," Hawkins said.

He said there are some rules in the classroom. Just as in the rest of the school, students are prohibited from using their phones, for instance. But he also knows that the Mastery Lab would not work unless the students want to use it.

"How do you get them to come and work again for you?" he asked. "It's by disguising it (educational value) in the idea that this is your reward."

MORE INFO ...

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Business cents

Students in 18 rural counties are profiting from E-Discovery Challenge concept

By Susan Riddell

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Joyce Groce, an 8th-grade humanities teacher at Clinton County Middle School, wants her students to discover how they already possess fundamental skills needed to run a business.

Kim Roberts, who teaches grades 4-6 at Deming Elementary School (Robertson County), wants her students to know there's nothing wrong with taking a business risk.

Eighth-grade social studies teacher Kathy Brown, at Monroe County Middle School, wants her students to gain an appreciation for living in a country with a free enterprise system.

Jennifer Blount, an 8th-grade social studies teacher at Bath County Middle School, wants her students to experience that "I can" moment and turn that into an attitude.

Fortunately, these teachers all are getting their wish thanks to the Innovative Entrepreneurship Project and its E-Discovery Challenge.

The E-Discovery Challenge portion of the project splits classes into groups. Each group creates a business and sells a product of their choosing.

Groups receive seed money to sell their product in a school or community setting at the end of nine weeks spent on the project. At the end of the project, groups return the initial seed money, but members are allowed to split any profit following their sale.

"We felt this would be an avenue to allow students to explore the business side of

economics," Groce said. "The program is designed to address a large variety of skills. We can tell students they possess many of these skills, but through E-Discovery Challenge, they will discover that they possess these skills."

The E-Discovery Challenge was created with rural southern and eastern Kentucky schools in mind. Targeted toward students in middle school grades, teachers are given curriculum to guide these students through lessons based on economics and a free enterprise system.

"It discusses entrepreneurs, risk, ethics, cooperation, products and services," said Roberts, who works with 5th-graders on the challenge. "This gives students a feeling that they are doing something that is real. They are creating, taking risks and seeing the outcomes first hand."

"The curriculum was well thought out," Brown added, "and is aligned with social studies, mathematics, reading and practical living/vocational studies core content. We had already covered our unit on economics when this project became available, so this has been a wonderful review, too."

Groce and fellow 8th-grade humanities teacher Katresa Collins had their students write speeches about what it takes to help people acquire business loans.

"They had to identify specific qualities – like responsibility – that would make them a good business risk," Groce said. "This was used to help create productive teams."

"Teams have brainstormed ideas, discussed materials and ways of production, created budgets and expense sheets, discussed marketing strategies, and established working relationships," Groce added.

Blount said she likes how the challenge has made her 8th-graders think about their futures.

"They also have been able to discuss what local businesses have been successful and what ones have not," Blount said. "They are thinking about real spending and economics in our county, our state and our nation."

Brown's students have come up with a theme and formed into groups that will make products in high demand for the spring.

"As a teacher, I have learned how a real-



Photo by Jennifer Blount

Students in Jennifer Blount's 8th-grade social studies class at Bath County Middle School are painting shoes to sell as one of their entrepreneurship projects. Bath County Middle is just one of several schools participating in the Innovative Entrepreneurship Project and E-Discovery Challenge.

world project can get the students excited about learning," Brown added. "I have always felt that students must apply what they learn to the real world, and usually we have to 'pretend,' but with this project they actually get real money in which they will make a real project and sell it to real customers."

School closings due to snow delayed the project, which began in January, for many districts, but most are now in the final stages of the challenge. The time has been worth it, especially for those schools who don't have the same access to programs like the E-Discovery Challenge.

"It is important for smaller districts to get this type of opportunity because they don't usually have the money to do them," Roberts said. "Like our district, there aren't a lot of businesses in the area, and the kids don't get to experience it firsthand."

"We live in a small rural community that is often overlooked when discussing innovative educational opportunities," Groce added. "However, our students will be receiving benefits that are often only afforded to larger districts."

As the students dive into the challenge, teachers also are able to learn something from it.

"We are continually seeking new and interesting ways of teaching our core content," Groce said. "When our principal informed us about this project and asked if we might be interested, we jumped at the opportunity."

"I learned that students know much more than we might think about economics," Blount said. "They do not always know the terms, but they have many good ideas. I have decided even if this program is not used in the future, I will try to do something similar in my classroom because it has been a great motivator."

MORE INFO...

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What is the Innovative Entrepreneurship Project?

The Innovative Entrepreneurship Project, a partnership between the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy and the Appalachian Regional Commission, is targeting students in grades 5-8 in Bath, Carter, Casey, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Elliott, Hart, Lawrence, Lewis, McCreary, Menifee, Monroe, Morgan, Robertson, Russell, Wayne and Wolfe counties. More than 65 teachers and 2,000 students are participating in the E-Discovery Challenge component of the project.

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Prichard Committee to pilot new resources

Teachers in six Kentucky school districts will be among the first in the nation to explore new ways to teach mathematics under a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence. The 9th- and 10th-grade teachers will work with new teaching and testing resources that have been developed by national experts to accelerate students' mastery of mathematics.

The new approach – known as assessment for learning or formative assessment – fits with Senate Bill 1 legislation requiring that Kentucky adopt new standards and develop a new testing approach. Assessment for learning emphasizes classroom-level activities that provide teachers with better insight into student learning needs. The emphasis is on quickly helping teachers adjust their teaching so all students reach high standards of learning.

During intensive professional development sessions, participating teachers will work with classroom performance events that provide immediate information on what part of a topic students already understand and what still needs work. In turn, that will allow teachers to adjust instruction so that all students ultimately master the mathematics being taught.

The pilot testing in Kentucky is part of a larger nationwide effort by the Gates Foundation to support the development and testing of prototype mathematics and literacy classroom assessments and instructional tools to help educators better prepare all students for life beyond high school.

The Prichard Committee has selected the following high schools to participate in the project:

- Boone County: Boone County, Conner, Cooper and Ryle
- Daviess County: Apollo, Beacon Central and Daviess County
- Jefferson County: Doss and Iroquois
- Jessamine County: East Jessamine and West Jessamine
- Kenton County: Dixie Heights, Scott and Simon Kenton
- Warren County: Warren Central and Warren East

Eighth-grade mathematics teachers in Daviess County also have been invited to participate in the work. For more information, contact Cindy Heine at cheine@prichardcommittee.org or (859) 233-9849, ext. 222.

Education leaders asked to take online parent involvement survey

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is asking district and school leaders to take an online survey on parent involvement in the schools.

The department will use the data collected as a baseline to guide implementation of the Commissioner's Parents Advisory Council's (CPAC) recommendations to improve student achievement through increased parent involvement.

This work is based on the CPAC report, *The Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle*, which can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/CPACreport>.

Superintendents' Survey:
<http://ncfl.KDEdistrict.sgizmo.com>

Principals' Survey:
<http://ncfl.KDEschool.sgizmo.com>

Simpson County named a Best Place to Work

The Simpson County school district will be honored at the 2010 Best Places to Work in Kentucky awards ceremony this month.

The statewide survey and awards program is designed to identify, recognize and honor the best places of employment in Kentucky that benefit the state's economy, its workforce and businesses.

The 2010 Best Places to Work in Kentucky list is composed of 64 workplaces. To be considered, recipients had to meet the following eligibility requirements:

- have at least 25 employees working in Kentucky
- be a business or government entity
- have a facility in the state of Kentucky
- must be in business a minimum of one year

Public and private business from across the state entered a two-part evaluation process. The first part consisted of evaluating each nominated entrant's workplace policies, practices and demographics. This part of the process was worth approximately 25 percent of the total evaluation. The second part consisted of an employee survey to measure the employee experience. This part of the process was worth approximately 75 percent of the total evaluation.

The combined scores determined the top workplaces and the final ranking. Best Companies Group managed the overall registration and survey process in Kentucky and

also analyzed the data and used its expertise to determine the final rankings.

Jim Flynn is the superintendent in Simpson County.

For more information on the Best Places to Work in Kentucky program, contact Jackie Miller at (877) 455-2159.

<http://BestPlacesToWorkKY.com>

Summer scholarships available for preparation to be counselors

Some Kentucky schools and communities are experiencing a shortage of counselors that is projected to grow in the coming years. To help meet the need, the Kentucky Counseling Association is offering scholarship assistance to teachers who might be interested in becoming school or mental health counselors.

Those who are interested, and who already have an undergraduate degree, can

apply for financial assistance for tuition. The association also provides grants of \$200 for textbooks.

The following participating institutions will provide one tuition waiver:

- Campbellsville University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Lindsey Wilson College
- Morehead State University
- Murray State University
- University of Louisville
- Western Kentucky University
- Xavier University

Preference will be granted to beginning master's students who have earned less than 15 hours. Documentation of acceptance by the participating university and a letter of recommendation are required, along with a completed application. The deadline for submitting materials is April 15.

www.kyca.org



Photo by Amy Wallot

Educating gifted students

Flemingsburg Elementary School (Fleming County) 2nd-grade teacher Michele Hawkins, right, speaks with her assistant principal, Angela Jackson, during an activity at the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education's conference held in February in Lexington. Sessions at the conference included topics such as strategies for advanced readers, mathematics standards, social-emotional needs of gifted students and what school administrators need to know.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences & Workshops

Connecting standards conference

The Connecting Standards with Success BRIDGING the GAPS Education Conference will be May 18 at the Maysville Community and Technical College-Maysville Campus. The conference registration deadline is April 30. The conference is free, and breakfast and lunch will be provided. Suggested conference participants include high school, college and university mathematics and English teachers, counselors, principals, superintendents and instructional supervisors. For more information, contact Pamela McGlone at pam.mcglone@kctcs.edu or call (606) 759-7141, ext. 66277.

Innovations for Learning

The Innovations for Learning (formerly Technology-Enhanced Classroom/TEC) Conference is June 8-9. More than 400 educators will have opportunities to learn how to improve their practice through the use of innovative tools and ideas. New this year is a leadership strand aimed specifically at principals and district leadership. For more information, to register or to inquire about presenting, contact Jeffrey Jones at jeffrey.jones@fayette.kyschools.us or (859) 381-4124.

Summer science teacher workshops

The Department of Physics and Astronomy at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., will offer summer workshops in physics, astronomy and physical science this summer. These workshops are frequently used to fulfill licensure requirements and also are the primary courses used for master's programs for in-service teachers. A doctoral program in science education also is available. For more information, contact Tom Jordan at tjordan@bsu.edu or (765) 285-8860.

Kentucky Safe Schools and Communities

The seventh annual Kentucky Safe Schools and Communities Conference is set for June 14-17 in Erlanger. The conference features keynote speakers John More (*Beyond the Basics – How to Expand Your Rights and Powers Within the School Zone*) and Todd Leatherman (*Cyberstalking and Predators*). Other speakers will present four general sessions and

six breakout sessions of interest to school resource officers, DARE officers, crime prevention officers and school administrators alike. DARE officers will receive their mandatory training on the last day. Contact Lee Ann Morrison at leeann.morrison@ksba.org for more information.

Contests & Other Events

'Congress in the Classroom'

"Congress in the Classroom" is designed for high school or middle school teachers of U.S. history, government, civics, political science or social studies. Forty teachers will be selected to take part in the program. Online applications must be received by April 15. The 2010 program will feature a broad overview of Congress with special attention to the mid-year elections of 2010. The workshop presents two types of sessions: those that focus on recent research and scholarship about Congress (and don't always have an immediate application in the classroom) and those geared to specific ways to teach students about the federal legislature. The 2010 workshop will be July 26-29 in East Peoria, Ill.

www.dirksencenter.org/programs_CiCapApplication.htm

KSD, KSB offer summer school

The Kentucky School for the Deaf is hosting a summer school for grades K-8. It will be held June 7-18. Enrollment in the session "Discovery Experience Adventure Fun in the World of Literacy" is limited. The application deadline is April 20. For more information, contact Nancy Mann at the Kentucky School for the Deaf at nancy.mann@ksd.kyschools.us or (859) 936-6723.

The Kentucky School for the Blind also is offering a two-week summer school program for elementary, middle and high school students who are blind or visually impaired. It will be held June 20-July 2. Sessions will run concurrently. For more information, contact Paula Penrod at the Kentucky School for the Blind at paula.penrod@ksb.kyschools.us or (502) 897-1583, ext. 233.

Virtual library video contest

The seventh annual "Create a KYVL Video Contest" is accepting entries from students across the state. Kentucky Virtual Library will use the videos to create awareness of its information resources that are available to all Kentucky residents and public school

and university students. Videos submitted must fall into one of these categories: short public service announcement (PSA) (30 seconds), long PSA (60 seconds), mini-featurette (five minutes). Videos must be in a digital format and uploaded to www.TeacherTube.com. E-mail Betsy Hughes at Betsy.Hughes@ky.gov for more information. Entries are due by April 21.

www.kyvl.org/videocontest.shtm

Presenters needed at Safe Schools event

The 16th annual Safe and Healthy Schools and Students Conference will be Nov. 15-16 in Louisville. Sponsored by the Kentucky School Boards Association and the Kentucky Center for School Safety, organizers are accepting applications for those interested in presenting at the conference. For more information, contact Karen McCuiston at the Kentucky Center for School Safety at (207) 809-5091.

www.kysafeschools.org

Kentucky Motorcycle Association design contest

The Kentucky Motorcycle Association (KMA) is a nonprofit organization that provides education and promotes safe motorcycle, dirt bike and ATV operation. The group has added a junior membership, which is open to anyone under the age of 18. KMA is holding a design contest for a patch to be worn by junior members, and the contest is open to individuals 17 years of age and younger. The deadline for submissions is April 30. The winner will receive a leather vest with his or her design embroidered on the back.

To submit a design, e-mail director18@kmakba.com and for more details on the contest, contact Sean Arms at (502) 417-0736.

www.kmakba.com

Civil rights poster contest

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, the commission is sponsoring a poster contest for students in grades K-12. The theme of the contest is "What It Means to be a Protector of Civil and Human Rights, a Voice for Equality and a Catalyst for Positive Change in Kentucky." Entries will be judged in four categories: grades K-2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12. The deadline for entries is May 15. Contact Cynthia Fox at cynthia.fox@ky.gov, (502) 595-4024 or (800) 292-5566 for more information.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Ludlow Elementary School (Ludlow Independent)

BULLETIN BOARD *(continued)*

Meet Ben Franklin

Veteran actor Dane Hosler presents an hour-long program as Benjamin Franklin, the famous American inventor, statesman and writer. In the program Franklin speaks to students and gets their assistance with several simple experiments while he shares his wit and wisdom. This program displays Franklin's contributions to science and literature as well as explaining his place in American history. The program is recommended for grades 4-12. Contact Hosler at throgmore@hotmail.com for pricing and scheduling.

Online credit recovery courses

The Kentucky Virtual Schools (KYVS)/Kentucky Department of Education is seeking proposals to develop online credit recovery courses. In Phase 1, KYVS is seeking qualified candidates to serve as lead project managers, online course designers, content specialists and technology specialists in the areas of Algebra, geometry, U.S. history, biology and English. If interested, e-mail Kiley Whitaker at kiley.whitaker@education.ky.gov or call (502) 564-4772.

Resources

ACT's World-of-Work Map

Students can explore careers with ACT's interactive World-of-Work Map. The circular career map spins as students choose career groups to investigate within broad categories, such as working with data, working with ideas and things, and working with people and ideas. Within each group are several specific career areas, such as education, computer/information specialties and manufacturing/processing. Each career area includes several specific occupations, with detailed information on work tasks, salary, size of the field, expected growth and how to prepare for the occupation. Students must register online for a free student account to use the World-of-Work Map.

www.actstudent.org

Activity guide, CD about natural world

Project Learning Tree (PLT) has released a new curriculum guide and music CD to engage children ages 3 to 6 in outdoor exploration and play. Eleven field-tested, hands-on activities showcase more than 130 early childhood experiences that integrate

investigations of nature with art, literature, mathematics, music and movement. Early childhood educators and caregivers can obtain a copy of PLT's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* curriculum by attending a PLT professional development workshop in their area. Contact information for each PLT state program can be found online, along with additional resources and correlations to academic standards and guidelines. For more information, contact Vanessa Bullwinkle at (202) 463-2472.

www.plt.org

Helpful links from KDE

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)'s homepage now has a new helpful link to the Commissioner of Education's Web pages. Visitors to www.education.ky.gov can click on the "Commissioner of Education" link in the list to the left and find the commissioner's pages, messages to superintendents, a biography of Commissioner Terry Holliday, presentations and more. Some items are RSS-enabled, and plans are to add more RSS feeds in the future. For data on items such as enrollment, teacher salaries, dropout rates and many others, visitors can click on the "Data Center" link, which also is located on the KDE homepage on the left-side list of links.

Folklife resources for educators

The American Folklife Center has posted "Folklife Resources for Educators," an online portal for educators working in K-12 and undergraduate education. It provides access to resources for teaching about aspects of folklife, culture and the traditional arts, with a focus on place and community-based teaching materials. All of the resources are available in a downloadable format.

www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers/index.html



Photo by Amy Wallot

Probability studies

Teacher Landon Salings helps 6th-grade student Kristin Stice with her probability assignment at the Edmonson County 5/6 Center. Students in Salings' class study areas of mathematics including data analysis, geometry of plane figures and measurement, statistics and probability, and coordinate graphing.

Nominations open for 2011 Kentucky Teacher Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2011 Kentucky Teacher Awards, sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc.

Any full-time public school teacher in the state with at least three years of experience is eligible. Additional qualifications are cited on the application. Teachers may be nominated by students or their parents, teaching peers, principals or superintendents, or anyone from the community who has an interest in honoring an outstanding educator.

Nominations will be accepted through May 15 at the 2011 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Web site at www.kentuckytoy.com. All nominated teachers are then required to complete a formal application, which must be submitted by June 30. Judging will take place in August by a blue ribbon panel of education professionals from around the state. Up to 24 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award winners will be announced in September. Following site visits with nine semifinalists in September and personal interviews with the top three candidates, the Kentucky Teacher of the Year will be

announced in Frankfort. At that time, all 24 teachers will be honored with cash awards and other mementos. Teacher Achievement Award winners will receive a cash gift of \$500; two of the three finalists will receive a cash gift of \$3,000; and the Teacher of the Year will receive a cash prize of \$10,000, along with an exciting professional development opportunity. The 2011 Kentucky Teacher of the Year will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

The Kentucky Teacher Awards program combines the best elements of the Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards and the Kentucky Teacher of the Year programs.

This is the 10th year for this innovative collaboration between private industry and public education. In that time, more than \$600,000 has been awarded to nearly 400 teachers in grades K through 12.

MORE INFO...

www.kentuckytoy.com

Donna Melton, donna.melton@education.ky.gov, (502) 564-1479



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fishy science

Science teacher Janet Miller examines a perch cornea that 8th-grade student CJ Vanderpool dissected during Miller's Life Science class at Beechwood High School (Beechwood Independent). "Dissections and other laboratory exercises are invaluable in teaching often hard-to-grasp concepts to middle school students," Miller said. "This creates an excitement about science that a lecture and books can't match." Miller's students also study concepts including genetics, evolution of living things, bacteria and viruses, plants and animals, ecology and ecosystems, and human body organization and structure.

Kentucky
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Educational resources available for Earth Day, environment lessons

April 22 marks the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Below is a roundup of opportunities for educators to delve into the study of Earth and the environment with students.

Forestry education

The Kentucky Division of Forestry offers educational opportunities and materials through Project Learning Tree (PLT) to teachers of all grades to help Kentuckians understand and appreciate the importance of well-managed forestlands.

PLT is an award-winning environmental education program designed for teachers and other educators working with students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The program uses the forest as a "window" into natural and man-made environments, helping students gain an awareness and knowledge of the world around them and their place in it.

Teachers also can access environmental education materials and forestry information to supplement texts and classroom instruction. These materials range from traditional handouts (puzzles, coloring sheets) to brochures, videos and CD-ROM programs.

www.forestry.ky.gov/programs/education

Water conservation, management

Project WET, an organization that promotes water education, offers teachers the *Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide*, a 517-page guide that contains 91 multidisciplinary water-related activities for students in grades K-12. The guide features cross-reference and planning charts, a glossary and background material on activity development and field testing. The cornerstone of Project WET is its method of teaching about water resources through hands-on, investigative, easy-to-use activities organized based on the following conceptual framework:

- Water has unique physical and chemical characteristics.
- Water is essential for all life.
- Water connects all Earth systems.
- Water is a natural resource.
- Water resources are managed.
- Water resources exist within social constructs.
- Water resources exist within cultural constructs.

Project WET activities are designed to complement existing curricula rather than displace or add additional concepts. Activities

fulfill objectives and educational standards in the sciences, as well as other disciplines, from fine arts to health.

<http://projectwet.org>

Recycling in a community

The Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection's Recycling Marketing Assistance (KRMA) Program has developed a guide for teachers and other education professionals who are interested in developing a school-based recycling program. The guide shows how to build a program to fit a specific school setting, which in turn can raise the awareness of students, teachers, administrators and parents about the positive effects of environmental responsibility.

The guide includes information on many topics, including:

- organizing a team
- conducting a waste audit
- deciding what to recycle
- establishing a system for collecting and storing recovered materials
- educating the school and community
- establishing a reward program

The KRMA program also can answer questions about properly managing a recycling program's growth and linking it to other

local recycling initiatives. Onsite assistance for schools also is available at no charge.

www.recycle.ky.gov

Air quality

The Kentucky Division for Air Quality offers a free air quality unit of study for upper elementary and middle school teachers called *Clean Air for Kentucky*. Activities and lessons are aligned with state and national standards, use multiple learning styles, and integrate subjects across the curriculum. Professional development (PD) training is available for teachers who would like to integrate the *Clean Air for Kentucky* materials into the classroom.

Teachers also can take part in a new PD workshop, "Teaching About Climate Change," that is geared primarily toward middle and high school teachers.

The Global Footprint Network has an interactive footprint calculator that lets students explore their ecological footprint or the sum of their personal impact on Earth's resources and the environment. The accompanying Web site allows students to compare the footprints of different nations, and it offers strategies for living more sustainably.

www.footprintnetwork.org